



## ***Juneau Access Supplemental Draft EIS Agency Scoping Meeting Summary***

This report provides a summary of the Juneau Access Supplemental Draft EIS Agency Scoping meeting, conducted Monday April 14, 2003 at the Travelodge conference room. This summary is drawn from notes taken by DOT&PF and consulting team staff at the meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce agency representatives to the Juneau Access SDEIS project, outline DOT&PF's project plan and schedule, answer questions about the SDEIS process, and solicit written comments on the scope of the project. Written scoping comments received from agencies will be included in the Scoping Report.

The meeting was facilitated by DOT&PF's project manager, Reuben Yost. Jack Beedle of DOT&PF was also in attendance. Representatives of the consulting team included Dennis Papilion and Barry Bergdoll of URS Corporation and Jim Calvin of McDowell Group. Agency attendees included the following:

### **Federal Highway Administration**

Tim Haugh

### **US Fish and Wildlife**

Richard Enriques, Michael Jacobson, Phil Schempf,

### **US Forest Service**

Matt Phillips, Ron Marvin, Ken Vaughan

### **Corp of Engineers – Juneau**

John Leeds

### **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**

Chris Meade

### **US Coast Guard**

James Helfinstine

### **Alaska Department of Fish and Game/Department of Natural Resources**

Carl Schrader

### **National Park Service – Skagway (attending telephonically)**

Meg Hahr, Carl Gurcke

Invited but not attending included Jim Powell of the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, Linda Shaw of the National Marine Fisheries Service and Bruce Noble of National Park Service.

A meeting agenda is attached to this report.

## ***Summary of Agency Scoping Meeting Discussion***

### **I. Historical Overview**

- Reuben Yost provided a summary of the project history.

### **II. Purpose of Supplemental Draft EIS**

- Reuben provided a summary of the reasons presented at the public scoping meetings held on April 8 in Juneau, April 9 in Skagway, and April 10 in Haines.

### **III. SDEIS Direction/ 2003 Reevaluation**

#### **A. Update Needs**

- Reuben provided a status of the 1994 404/NEPA Merger Agreement between agencies, including DOT&PF, EPA, ACOE, NMFS, DNR, and FHWA.
- Agreement expired in June 2002
- SDEIS will not be prepared under agreement; however, will follow principles established by Commissioner Perkins at the time the merger expired: agencies will be asked to comment on:
  - Purpose and Need
  - Range of Alternatives
  - Preferred Alternative
- The purpose of the project has not changed, and all agencies other than EPA have concurred on the Purpose and Need statement. DOT&PF will meet with EPA to try to resolve P&N disagreement.
- Traffic Survey /Forecast will be prepared for each access improvement including assessment of each traffic component (e.g. RVs, trucks) (McDowell)
- Household survey to be conducted in all communities. McDowell to assess the number of surveys to adequately collect public data.
- User Benefit Analysis prepared as an Appendix based on detailed cost estimate provided by DOT.

#### **Update Alternatives**

- DOT to prepare a new Technical Alignment Report, a draft will be made available to interested agencies as soon as possible, target date is mid June
- Technical Alignment Report will be used to prepare a Detailed Cost Estimate for all alternatives.
- Report will include information on proposed terminals at Katzechin, Sawmill Cove, and William Henry Bay, as well as reconfigured terminals in Juneau, Haines, and Skagway.
- All alternatives need to address pullouts at bridges for possible access and boat launches for recreational and commercial use. (Jim Helfinstine)
- Vessel types and potential schedules will be updated for all alternatives.
- Alternative 2 will remain as State's "Preliminary Preferred Alternative".
- SDEIS needs to address the adjacent planning and engineering studies for surrounding projects, such as Kensington Mine, Land Transfers, Goldbelt Cascade Point. (Ken Vaughan, Richard Enriquez)
- Consider other probable locations for terminals. Be consistent with other projects if reasonable. (Ken Vaughan)
- The question of what alternatives have been developed since 1997 was raised, and the status of the West Lynn and Taku routes was the focus of some discussion.

- Discussion of Taku Alternative elimination needs to be expanded to include why Canadians did not want the road. DOT should contact them to evaluate whether it is a viable alternative with changes in government. Original P&N was altered to justify elimination of Taku Alternative and other alternatives to benefit Alternative 2. (Jim Helfinstine)
- Purpose and Need was developed over the course of the DEIS, based upon scoping and survey results, and was used to evaluate the remaining alternatives.
- DOT will evaluate if more discussion is necessary to explain why the Taku Alternative was not carried into the DEIS.
- It was noted that DOT will make an initial assessment of the Taku alternative. If it is considered feasible and meeting purpose and need, DOTPF will then approach the Canadian government.

## **B. Affected Environment**

### **Essential Fish Habitat**

- Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) assessment needs to be included in SDEIS, expanding upon the Anadromous Fish Habitat Technical Report. Marine impacts will be included in the new study. DOTPF will prepare a scope of study and circulate to the agencies.
- Potential impacts from side casting blast material needs to be evaluated. Study should prioritize areas that are more suitable to side casting. (Jim Helfinstine)
- Underwater camera for habitat assessment will be used versus underwater diving methods. Too expensive unless absolutely necessary.
- ACOE 404 and Section 10a permits will be required for side casting. (John Leeds)
- ACOE wants to know how deep slopes are adjacent to blast areas. Concerned about potential areas of unstable fill material and/or that provide access points along alignment. (John Leeds)
- Need to confirm whether a 404 or 402 permit applies. DOT does not believe a 402 permit applies.
- Need to supplement anadromous fish stream report with information on resident fish.

### **Steller Sealions**

- Steller Sea Lion haul-out at Gran Point has been monitored by air in 1998 and by remote camera since fall of 2002. Preliminary assessment indicates that the haul-outs are not used between July and October.
- NMFS has accepted proposed mitigation defined in 1997 DEIS and detailed in 1998 biological assessment. May not need to do new Section 7, unless new access points are identified or additional impacts are defined.

### **Bald Eagles**

- Bald Eagles monitoring and studies will need to be modified to include West Lynn Canal Alternative.
- A new report with nesting sites will be developed.

### **Wildlife**

- Wildlife habitat assessment included four indicator species: black bear, brown bear, marten, and –mountain goat.
- Comments have stated that we need to add moose in Berners Bay, deer, wolf, and trumpeter swans.

- Add species of concern to assessment, for individual habitat impacts only and not as indicator species (wolf, deer, and moose).
- Stay away from modeling indicator species, address impacts of specific species. Don't use indicator species for impact assessment. (Phil Schempf)
- You may need to stick with indicator species concept in order to be consistent with Forest Service assessments (Ken Vaughan)
- Harbor Seals may need to be addressed, especially on West Lynn Alternative. (Richard Enriquez)

### **Wetlands**

- Comments on the original draft EIS asked for analysis of individual wetlands. Should identify boundaries of each wetlands complex. Wetlands need more documentation regarding delineation and functional assessment. Hydrogeomorphic mapping (HGM) not used in SE, and Adamus is a freshwater model.
- ACOE reiterated its request to get copies of the original wetlands delineation field data
- ADF&G would like to get copies of original color photos; the appendix has low quality black and white photocopies which are of little value
- Less concerned about delineation, more about functional analysis. (Chris Meade)
- DEIS used wetland complexes as basis for analysis.
- Suggested that the methodology used in the Juneau Airport EIS be used for Juneau Access. Juneau Airport project is applying a modified Adamus methodology for wetlands analysis to account for the saltwater species. (Carl Schrader)
- Wetlands complex not defined very well in DEIS. Boundaries need to be defined better. (John Leeds)
- SDEIS to include more evaluation of wetlands on West Lynn Canal for: William Henry Bay, Beardsley River, Endicott River, Glacier Point, Sullivan River.
- URS will develop methodology for wetlands assessment using sub-complexes to delineate and assess more specific wetland impacts than in 1997 DEIS.
- Should use complex and sub-complex level analysis, concentrating on Riparian areas
- Secondary impacts may have implications on wetlands. The trend has recently been to use wetland fill areas for RV parks based on lack of available land to plan and build RV parks (Carl Schrader). Example of use is Spruce Meadows – Montana Road (along Montana Creek).
- Issue will be addressed by McDowell in socioeconomic study. Study should include a definition of upland areas suitable for RV parks to be coordinated with city planning departments.
- DEIS /socioeconomic study should include estimate of areas (wetlands) that may be filled to accommodate RV usage based on the available upland properties. Study should also address solid waste impacts and other issues associated with increase in RV's. Study should also address how impacts will be mitigated. (Jim Helfinstine, Carl Schrader, and Michael Jacobson)
- Suggested that there be a joint city/state plan to deal with secondary impacts. Could include an inventory of RV parking sites and assessment of number of sites needed. It was noted that Mendenhall Campground usage has been low.

### **Land Use**

- Land Use study should address Skagway area hydroelectric projects. (Richard Enriquez)
- There will be an update of land status and usage since the DEIS.

### **Avalanches**

- ADOTPF will prepare a detailed mitigation plan.

**Cultural Resources**

- Cultural Resources will be updated based on revised Section 106 regulations requiring more coordination with SHPO, public and tribal representatives.
- Need to collect USFS information on cultural resources for West Lynn Canal.
- Skagway is part of two National Landmarks (Chilkoot Trail & Dyea Site National Historic Landmark and Skagway & White Pass District National Historic Landmark). Need to get boundaries of landmarks and Dewey Lake recreation site/trail system to assess potential Section 4f issues.
- Skagway city is in a historical district within the landmark.

**Visual Resources**

(No comments noted)

**Noise Environment**

- Noise studies will be conducted for Haines and Skagway residents and Skagway Recreation area based on public scoping meetings.
- Noise impacts to Endicott Wilderness Area should be addressed. (Ken Vaughan)
- Noise study should address indirect impacts from increased truck traffic (Tim Haugh)

**Miscellaneous**

- West Lynn Canal Alignment should not be eliminated due to karst. Forest Service is doing study in Prince of Wales where karst exists and it is not seen as a problem. Key issue is hydrology to allow natural flow of water in karst areas. Karst study not too expensive. Forest Service staff observed areas with caves and probable karst, along West Lynn, but they did not document. West Lynn alignment needs to be studied for actual karst impacts. (Ken Vaughan)
- The SDEIS should have subsistence section, addressing “customary and traditional use” as defined by ANILCA.
- SDEIS should identify trail and other recreational use impacts (Tim Haugh)

**C. Environmental Consequences****Wetlands**

- Wetlands impact mitigations to be proposed within watershed. Preference to restore versus to create wetlands.

**Wildlife**

- Wildlife crossing the road will be an issue.

**Socioeconomic**

- SDEIS should address impacts on commercial fishermen due to increase in access for sport boats to Lynn Canal. (Ken Vaughan)

**Navigability Issues**

- Coast Guard will prepare Navigability Determinations on each water body. (Jim Helfinstine)
- BLM adjudication of navigability needs to be addressed. (Ken Vaughan)
- Need to keep discussion of navigability narrow to only address bridges. (Ken Vaughan)

**Visual Impacts**

- URS will do simulations.
- Vehicle lights at night could be a visual impact.

**Historical/4f**

(No comments noted)

**Noise Impacts**

- Haines has asked about noise impacts on the East Lynn alternative. Noise in the Endicott Wilderness is an issue, as is compression brake noise from heavy truck traffic.

**Secondary and Cumulative Impacts**

- Secondary and Cumulative Impacts need to include foreseeable impacts from increased access to Lynn Canal and Tongass National Forest.
- The EIS must consider secondary development impacts, such as at Cascade Point and Kensington.

**Mitigation Report**

- Mitigation Report to include consolidation of all mitigation defined in each section. 1997 DEIS did not include. Report to breakout different types of mitigation and who is responsible for monitoring.
- If impacts occur within Forest Service land, preference is to mitigate on Forest Service land. (Ron Marvin)

**Miscellaneous**

- Record of Decision (ROD) and Permits are not tied together.
- FHWA will issue ROD without final permits. (Tim Haugh)
- Need to add new section on subsistence in SDEIS. (Tim Haugh)
- SDEIS will include new section on construction, which will combine all discussions on construction from each resource section.
- Draft 404 applications not included in SDEIS. Application will be submitted separately. 404 B1 report will be included in SDEIS as Appendix.

**IV. Cooperating Agencies Roles and Responsibilities**

The following are listed as cooperating agencies:

- EPA – requested and signed a specific agreement
- NMFS
- USFWS
- USFS
- NPS
- Coast Guard
- ACOE – need to send letter
- ADFG/DNR – need to send letter to clarify lead
- Department of Commerce and Economic Development – need to confirm if still need to be listed

## **V. Schedule for Written Comments and Next Agency Meeting**

The deadline for Agency comments was set at April 25. There will be an agency meeting in May to discuss and review scope of work for Phase 2 SDEIS Technical Studies. The scoping document will be delivered to all agencies. Newsletters will be distributed to the public summarizing scoping and the household survey. The next agency meeting date set for May 21, 8:30 AM at the Travelodge..